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Please find the full Text as download at:
http://www.baltic-sea-forum.org/de/programm/

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Yours Excellencies,
ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the Chairman and the members of the board of AMRI E for their generosity, giving me the opportunity to speak at this year’s High Level Conference, here in beautiful Malta.

While Malta is an island, the location of our today’s conference represents in an unique way, the topic of our recent conference. Malta represents explicitly, how a nation can keep it specific history, heritage and culture and be at the same time an integrated part of the co-operative and united community, of both the Mediterranean and the European Union.

Thus, I am very grateful to provide the honourable guests and experts some notes on co-operation and co-ordination in the Baltic Sea Region. This perspective might help to raise the head, from looking down south to the recent developments, problems and chances of the Mediterranean, to look up to the north, to one of the most progressive regions, measured by an European or even global scale.
THE BALTIC SEA REGION – PRESENT AND FUTURE

Yes, indeed, the Baltic Sea Region is an extraordinary example of effective, clear and state of the art regional co-operation and co-ordination within the frameworks of the European Union.

Dynamics, growth and vital integration, these are the characteristics, distinguishing one of Europe's key regions: the Baltic Sea or Mare Balticum. Four out of ten new members of the European Union are part of the community around Europe's largest inland sea. Hence, since May 1st 2004, the region is in a special focus of economy and politics.

About 90 million people live in this region and nine per cent of the world's gross national product are generated here already. Today, trade across this Baltic Sea is the integrating force for the growing together of the Baltic Sea states as well as the driving force for economic dynamism of the region. Leading economic institutes forecast a doubling in international trade with the Baltic Sea region to 2015. Some experts even define this fast and flourishing mainly economic increase as a „rally of growth“. This development is also due to relations between other regions and countries as there are e.g. Russia or Southern Europe and Asia. Close relations between the Baltic Sea region and the Mediterranean are being established, or are going to be established. This is a challenge AMRIE may take over.
The approach of co-operative acting in the region is based on certain historical roots. So at the time of the Hanseatic League, merchants used the Baltic Sea to establish trade routes between its member cities. Hence, it was consequent that after the end of the Cold-War, in the last decade of the twentieth century businessmen fast and constantly began to re-establish business contacts in the Baltic Sea Region.

Baltic Sea co-operation has never been limited to government activities. A prominent feature of such co-operation, in fact, is that it involves a great number of actors of all kinds, and is based also on non-state ideas. Cities, regional authorities, enterprises, their respective organisations, all make their specific contributions, as do artistic and creative people in fields ranging from classical music to experimental on-line design.

**BALTIC SEA FORUM – NETWORKING AND COMPETENCE FOR THE BALTIC SEA**

Speaking to You as member of the Baltic Sea Forum, I am dedicated to say a few words on this organisation, as one of the examples of super-ordinated integrated engagement in the region. Starting in 1992, the **BALTIC SEA FORUM** already realised the unique development of the region in the nineties and has established a considerable network around the *Mare Balticum*. The non-profit organisation informs, advises and supports its more than 120 members, partners and institutions
in all matters concerning the cultural, political and economic co-operation with the Baltic Sea region.

Our organisation aims and works to promote economic and cultural co-operation in the Baltic Sea region and supports the EU’s Northern Dimension Action Plan. This external and cross-border policies of the European Union reflects the EU’s relations with Russia (and particularly North-west Russia) in the Baltic Sea region and Arctic Sea region. A particular emphasis is placed on subsidiarity, and on ensuring the active participation of all stakeholders in the North, including regional organizations, local and regional authorities, the academic and business communities, and civil society. Nobody should feel left behind...

As in independent platform, the Baltic Sea Forum and its network facilitates the exchange of experiences, opinions and ideas to the Baltic Sea region to improve the flow of information within the Baltic Sea region. Its major asset is the integration of institutions, corporations and personalities from all states of the region.

Beside the organisation of conferences, discussion panels, workshops and meetings as well as exchanging know-how and implementing projects and publication, the Baltic Sea Forum
acts strongly in consulting political institutions on how to reduce obstacles for co-operation in the region, though we are not a political institution ourselves.

Our forum’s activities started parallel with a political initiative, intensifying the co-operation and co-ordination of intergovernmental work in the region.

**WHO-IS-WHO OF THE BALTIC SEA AREA**
Namely, also in March 1992 the **Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)** was established at a conference of the foreign ministers of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Sweden and a member of the European Commission in Copenhagen, joined by Iceland in 1995. The CBSS serves as an overall regional forum for intergovernmental co-operation, focusing on the need for intensified co-ordination of activities in virtually every field of government, (with the notable exception of military defence, which is explicitly excluded as a potential area of co-operation in the Council’s Terms of Reference), among the Baltic Sea States. Firstly, CBSS Ministerial meetings have been held in the following fields: agriculture; children's affairs; culture, economic affairs, education, energy, finance, health, information technology, interior, justice, labour, social affairs, spatial planning, trade and industry, transport, youth affairs. Secondly, CBSS meetings at the level of Directors General have
been held in the following fields: border control, civil protection, customs, prosecutors-general, tax administration.

All meetings aim at giving impulses to civil society by a communicative presentation, as well as the networking capacities. The results are many concrete projects of active regional political co-operation.

This includes integrated workgroups under the roof of the CBSS, a mutual internet platform BALTICSEA.NET and the common vision and its innovative platform “Baltic 21”.

I. As far as, additional governmental patterns are concerned, four organisation are active, number five will be AMRIE.

I.1. The Goal of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference (BSPC) is to develop co-operation among parliamentary institutions of the Baltic Sea area (both on a regional and national level) and to facilitate discussion of major regional issues. The Chairman-in-Office in annual sessions of the CBSS traditionally participates in annual sessions of the BSPC by presenting the work programme of the CBSS Presidency, using synergy effects.
I.2. The Baltic Sea States Subregional Co-operation (BSSSC) was founded in Stavanger, Norway, 1993. Its members are regional authorities (level directly below the national level authorities) of the 10 Baltic Sea littoral states. The BSSSC has also established a BSSSC Youth Co-ordinators Network. And, what is most important, the BSSSC has obtained an observer status in the Committee of the Regions of the European Union.

I.3. The Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe (CPMR) brings together some 150 Regions from 25 States - both members and non-members of the EU. The CPMR regions – regions similar to AMRIE - aim to promote together a more balanced development of the European Union highlighting the value of all its geographical areas with a view to strengthening its economic, social and territorial cohesion.

I.4. Visions and Strategies Around the Baltic 2010 (VASAB) consists of representatives from national and regional ministries of the Baltic Sea region (BSR) responsible for environment protection and for spatial planning and met in Karlskrona, Sweden, August 1992, for the first time. The conference was also attended by representatives from international organisations. It was decided to jointly prepare a document on a spatial development concept ‘Vision and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010’.
II. Also classic business-associations play specific part in the region.

II.1. The Baltic Sea Chambers of Commerce Association (BCCA) serves to unite the Chambers of Commerce of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden. The BCCA was established in June 1992 in Rostock-Warnemünde, Germany, in order to give the business community of the region a united voice for common concerns. The BCCA represents more than 450,000 companies belonging to all sectors of the Northern and North-Eastern European markets. The threefold task of the BCCA is to protect and uphold the interests of private entrepreneurship by advising policy-makers in business related affairs, offering services to the business community and providing facilities for contacts, debates and meetings in the region.

II.2. The Baltic Sea Trade Union Network (BASTUN) was established in connection with the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) Congress in Helsinki in July 1999. The Baltic Sea Trade Union Network project is financed partly by EU DG Education and Culture, partly by the Nordic Trade Union confederations and the German DGB. The name of the project is 'Development of the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network'.
III. Regional co-operation in the Baltic started as early as 1989, where two platforms were set up to approach certain specific communal areas.

III.1. B7 is a network of the 7 largest islands in the Baltic Sea established since 1989. Partners of the co-operation are Bornholm (Denmark), Gotland (Sweden), Hiiumaa (Estonia), Rügen (Germany), Saaremaa (Estonia), Aland (autonomous region of Finland), Öland (Sweden). Since 1996 B7 has a representation in Brussels. The islands are united in their history, culture and their common location but mostly for the simple fact that they are islands. B7 is working to minimise permanent constraints that put islands at a comparative and competitive disadvantage to the mainland while still being required to offer their citizens the basic range of services and quality of life. B7 works to encourage the social, economic and spatial development of the islands to build on their uniqueness, promote cultural understanding and to learn through exchange of experiences and ideas. And all this is of high priority to Malta, also – isn’t it ?!

III.2. The Union of the Baltic Cities (UBC) was established in Gdansk, Poland on 20 September 1991. The UBC has a network of over 100 member cities from 10 Baltic Sea countries. Article 1 of the UBC Statute reads: The Union's aim is to promote and strengthen co-operation and exchange of
experience among the cities in the Baltic Sea Region, to advocate for common interests of the local authorities in the region, and to act on behalf of the cities and local authorities in common matters towards regional, national, European and international bodies, as well as achieving sustainable development in the Baltic Sea Region with full respect to European principles of local and regional self-governance and subsidiarity.

IV. As far as NGOs, respectively civil society platforms are concerned, the co-ordinated regional co-operation includes the following:

IV.1. The Baltic Development Forum (BDF) was established in 1999. The Forum provides decision-makers a network for discussing new business opportunities and for developing new regional strategies in public-private partnerships. BDF aims to ‘put the Baltic Sea region on the global map’ by developing strong external ties with the world outside the region and fostering new partnerships across sectors and across borders. It aims to develop a dynamic business environment that is internationally competitive in the global economy. To further connect and promote the region, the BDF launched the Baltic Sea Research Network for academics in 2002. BDF has presented its visions for the EU’s new Northern Dimension Action Plan for 2004-06 in order to secure the influence of the business community. The Baltic Development Forum headquarters are located in Copenhagen, Denmark.
IV.2. THE BALTIC SEA NGO FORUM started 2001 and is a meeting point for various non-governmental organisations from the countries in the region.

IV.3. HELCOM Since the field of ecology and sustainable development is vital for the Baltic sea region complementary structures linking government interaction and NGO activities have been build up. HELCOM is the governing body of the 'Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area' - more usually known as the Helsinki Convention. The headquarters of the Helsinki Commission are located in Helsinki, Finland. Recently Helcom and the Baltic Sea Forum, together with the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety are implementing a common project. The second HELCOM Youth Forum from 9th to 11th of August 2005 in Rostock, Germany brings together students from all Baltic Sea riparian states to participate in the event. Under the claim “My Baltic Sea of tomorrow” up to five students from each country will discuss issues on the maritime and ecological development of the Baltic Sea. I think that is good, as You have to attract the young generation.

INNOVATIVE PROJECTS
You now might have an impression on the vital and manifold patterns of co-operative actors and partners of the Baltic Sea Region. When I said to You in the beginning, that the co-
operation the area can be considered as a model, this is very much due the fact of its transparent and lean access. A clear and innovative evidence of this claim, is the Internet. Speaking of networks, the internet is the technical tool of communicative integration and participation. Thus introducing a “Gateway to the Baltic Sea Region”.

The need for a Internet Portal providing comprehensive information about a variety of areas of co-operation and co-operative activities in the Baltic Sea Region was expressed for the first time at the 2nd Co-ordination Meeting of the Heads of Baltic Sea Region Organisations in Lillehammer, Norway on 25 October 2002. The result is an easy access to the region under www.balticsea.net.

To combine and integrate all this qualified and relevant approaches, and implementing all these visions and ideas into straight projects for the 21st century, we need an umbrella, thus the Baltic Sea Region initiated the platform Baltic 21. Baltic 21 has been established following decision taken by the heads of government of the Baltic Sea States during their summit in 1996. It is the Baltic Sea Region multistakeholder forum for sustainable development. Its members are the CBSS states, the European Commission and a number of intergovernmental organisations, international financial institutions and international networks of regional and

The essential objective of the Baltic Sea Region co-operation is the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their peoples within the framework of sustainable development, sustainable management of natural resources and protection of the environment.

CONCLUSION AND VISION

Now my vision for the future. In this presentation we saw the Baltic Sea Region as an economic and cultural area, in which politics are actively involved in designing the set-ups and frameworks, as well as non-political organisations. It a “together” of politics and civil society, not an “against”.

Since the end of the Cold-War politics, economy, science, the arts and society redefine regional co-operation and open new fruitful connections between them in the whole Baltic Sea Region, nationally and even internationally. This development has traditional roots, but is visionary as well looking forward. In total, the institutional regional co-operation and co-ordination can be considered as a role-model. Clear and lean structures and competencies, as well as an efficient combination of active and engaged partners, from both governmental- and non-
governmental organisations, are the prerequisites. Why not copy this model and make it even better.

The equal and common presence and communication of governmental and non-governmental-organisation can be considered as one of the mayor characteristics of the regions. Presenting themselves as an integrated and transparent networks, these structures provide an appropriate base, not just co-ordinating political frameworks to liberate new economic markets. All these communicative platforms encourage and strengthen the lively and direct exchange between people elderly and young ones giving them a perspective and their participation in the Baltic Sea Region. This bottom up character is one of its major assets. Thus this process of communication and networking does not just enhance the legitimacy of government activities. It is additionally a substantial basis of identifying common goals of intergovernmental co-operation and creating a super-ordinated identity of the Baltic Sea Region. Hopefully it will continue like this or even improve.

**PONITS FOR DISCUSSION**

- Co-operation across national borders
- Sea-Motorways: An opportunity
- Developing the Lisbon-Process
• Baltic Sea Forum and Co-operation: A model for the Mediterranean
• Bringing into account the cultural and physical difference
• = A joint conference initiative between the Baltic Sea Region and the Mediterranean (organised by AMRIE) ?!

Thank You very much for Your attention.